



# Growing through times of change

## Week 8 - Valuing grief



St Paul's  
LUTHERAN CHURCH BOX HILL

*We probably experience grief more often than we realise.* We usually associate grief with the death or loss of someone or something of great significance in our lives. But it may be an emotion we also experience at times of less apparent 'significance'.

Grief has been defined as *"desperately wanting something that you can't have"*. That we may feel aspects of the sadness, confusion, helplessness, yearning, pain and sorrow that accompany grief when something we long for is unattainable for us.

Have there been times over the last few months that you have desperately wanted something you can't have? What happens if you consider that you may have been experiencing grief in those times? *To see these things as grief shifts the focus to an internal experience that is deeply personal and intimate and must be owned by me.* What happens in you when you recognise and acknowledge that?

*Grief is uncomfortable.* It's uncomfortable when we experience it ourselves and it's uncomfortable to watch others experience it. We tend to try to lessen and avoid the discomfort – in ourselves and in others.

We grieve for a reason. It has a purpose as part of our human story. What might our grief be asking us to notice?

- ≈ *Maybe it's a reminder to honour what holds meaning in our lives.* To focus on those things that really matter, when we have become so accustomed to focusing on the urgent and unimportant.
- ≈ *Maybe it's a reminder to be grateful.* To not take for granted those things that we have come to take for granted. To see with new eyes those things we value.
- ≈ *Maybe it's a reminder to connect with others who also know grief.* To share our pain and loss and find comfort and refuge in each other.
- ≈ *Maybe it's a reminder to connect with ourselves.* To force us to pay attention to the reflections of our mind, heart and soul and lead us to self-awareness and self-compassion.
- ≈ *Maybe it's a reminder that loss is a part of life.* That we grieve in proportion to how much we love and therefore every experience of grief reflects something in life that we have loved.

*Grief takes time.* It will take as long as it takes, and it will ask things of you that require patience, understanding and vulnerability. *As you give your grief time, fluctuating between the need to grieve and the need to re-invest in life, you will find yourself moving between the two. It will become part of the way you live.* As you allow yourself to grieve, to sit in the discomfort and vulnerability, to move through its pain and helplessness and sadness, it will find a place in you that enables you to make a space for it. You will come to recognise that suffering can enrich and strengthen and eventually bless the life you live.



*It will help you to be with others who grieve.* You will be able to be authentically with them. Allowing them to sit in their own discomfort, vulnerability, and pain – holding them with your presence and your understanding.

*There is no formula for grief.* It follows no pattern or sequential stages and it has been observed that most of us will work through our own grief well enough in our own way. However if it accompanies other major stresses or trauma or vulnerability then its effects may be more serious. It may cause us to get stuck in our grief and can lead to depression. Then it is important to find someone who can help guide you through it.

*To be able to recognise grief in our lives is so valuable.* We can then identify the difference between those things that are genuine hopes, expectations and goals to work toward and those things that we desperately want but can't have. Then we can cease our striving and complaining and resistance and recognise that what we are experiencing is a valid and deep sense of loss. *Then we can begin the journey toward peace that comes with acceptance and faith that even in this there is growth and hope.*

*Then you really will know the value of grief.*

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